

# **Pneumonic Plague Extended and Short Messages**

## **Health and Safety Information for the First Hours**

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Grade Level: 8.4

## **Pneumonic Plague Extended Message**

### **Health and Safety Information for the First Hours**

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#### ***What is happening?***

- This is an urgent health message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Please pay careful attention to this message to protect your health and that of others.
- Public health officials believe that the bacteria that cause pneumonic plague may have been deliberately released into the air in the *xxx area*.
- Pneumonic plague is a life-threatening, serious infection of the lungs. It is caused by breathing in the plague bacteria.
- Plague can be spread from person to person. Avoid close and direct contact with people with plague symptoms.
- We have not confirmed the deliberate release of plague and do not know the extent or source of the outbreak.
- Although a type of plague called bubonic plague does occasionally happen naturally in some parts of the US, pneumonic plague is even less frequent, which is the cause for concern.
- Local, state, and federal officials, including HHS, FBI, and Homeland Security, are working together. Updated announcements will be made as soon as officials know more.
- Ill persons should seek care immediately. Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches and chills, chest pain, and cough. Some people may cough up blood and have stomach pains. Most people develop symptoms within 1 to 4 days after exposure.
- Because plague symptoms may be similar to those of the flu early in the illness, anyone with symptoms of the flu or pneumonic plague should seek medical care right away.
- We have challenges ahead, and we are working to find out more about this outbreak. By staying informed and following instructions from health officials, you can protect yourself, your family, and the community against this public health threat.
- For more information about the plague, visit the HHS Web site at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) plague page at

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/plague/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest information.

- This message contains additional information that can help protect your health and the health of others.

### ***What is plague?***

- Plague is a life-threatening disease caused by bacteria.
- Some forms of plague, such as bubonic plague, occur naturally. Every year, a few cases of plague occur in the United States and most of them are the bubonic form of the disease.
- However, in this case, officials think that plague may have been spread intentionally by releasing plague bacteria into the environment, either indoors or outdoors.
- Officials are concerned that pneumonic plague has been spread. It is an infection of the lungs caused by inhaling the bacteria.
- Pneumonic plague can spread from person to person. The bacteria can spread through the respiratory droplets caused by sneezing or coughing. This usually occurs through close and direct contact, within 6 feet, with a sick person.

### ***What are the symptoms of pneumonic plague?***

- Symptoms of pneumonic plague usually occur between 1 and 6 days after contact with the plague bacteria.
- The first signs of illness include fever, headache, weakness, muscle aches, cough, shortness of breath, and chills. These symptoms may be similar to those of the flu; however, symptoms of plague are usually more serious. Some people may cough up blood, feel sick to their stomach, throw up, or have stomach pains. Pneumonia can develop quickly.
- Plague is not spread from clothing, furniture, utensils, or bedding.

### ***What to do if you are experiencing symptoms of pneumonic plague and you live in xxx area***

- If you are experiencing symptoms of plague, begin medical treatment as soon as possible after the first symptoms to increase the chance of getting well.
- For more information on how and where to get treatment, call your local public health department at xxx-xxx-xxxx or your doctor. Describe your symptoms and say why you are concerned.
- Until you can get medical help, stay away from others to avoid spreading the disease.
- Please follow these directions to avoid spreading the disease to others:
  1. Cover your mouth when you cough..
  2. Do not cough near others. Wear a tight fitting surgical mask if possible, or use a piece of cloth or makeshift mask if no other mask is available.

### ***What to do if you think you might have been exposed to pneumonic plague***

- If you were near xxx area, you may have been exposed to plague. You may also be exposed if you have been in close contact with someone who has the symptoms of pneumonic plague, such as coughing.

- Even if you don't feel sick, if you think you might have been exposed to plague, call your doctor or your local public health department at xxx-xxx-xxxx and explain your concerns. They will give you information on how and where to get help.
- If you have been exposed, the right treatment may keep you from getting sick.
- Several types of antibiotics are effective for treating and preventing the disease. People who are ill should seek care immediately. People who have been exposed but are not yet ill should listen for instructions from authorities. Antibiotics should be given within 24 hours of the first symptoms.

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***What to do if you are concerned about plague***

- It is natural to be concerned or afraid at a time like this. If you do not have any symptoms, have not been near xxx area, and have not been near someone sick with plague, you most likely have **not** been exposed to plague.
- People who are concerned about plague exposure will be evaluated and treated if necessary. To limit the spread of disease, health authorities need to find and treat those who are sick or have been in direct contact with a sick person.
- To avoid getting sick, stay away from people with flu-like symptoms and stay away from the area where officials believe the bacteria were released.
- If you *must* have direct and close contact with someone with plague, wear a tightly fitting surgical mask.
- To stay as safe and healthy as possible, stay informed and follow the instructions of public health officials.

***What is being done and how to get more information***

- Local, state, and federal officials, including HHS, FBI, and Homeland Security, are working together. Updated announcements will be made as soon as officials know more.
- Stay informed by turning to the radio, television, or Internet news for updated health and safety announcements. Go to [insert local media information here] to hear the latest information from local officials.
- For more information about the plague, visit the HHS Web site at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) plague page at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/plague/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest information.

**Grade Level: 10.5**

## **Pneumonic Plague Short Message**

### **Health and Safety Information for the First Hours**

- This is an urgent health message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Public health officials believe that the bacteria that cause pneumonic plague may have been deliberately released into the air in the *xxx area*.
- Pneumonic plague is a life-threatening, serious infection of the lungs caused by inhaling the bacteria.
- At this time, we have not confirmed the deliberate release of plague and do not know the extent or source of the outbreak.
- Local, state, and federal officials, including HHS, FBI, and Homeland Security, are working together. Updated announcements will be made as soon as officials know more.
- Plague can be spread from person to person. Avoid close contact with people who have plague symptoms.
- Ill persons should seek care immediately.
- Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches and chills, chest pain, and cough. Some people may cough up blood and have stomach pains. Most people develop symptoms within 1 to 4 days after exposure.
- Because flu and plague symptoms may be similar early in the illness, anyone with symptoms of the flu or pneumonic plague should seek medical care right away.
- Although a type of plague called bubonic plague does occasionally occur naturally in some parts of the country, pneumonic plague is even less frequent, which is the cause for concern.
- We have challenges ahead, and we are working to find out more about this outbreak. By staying informed and following instructions from health officials, you can protect yourself, your family, and the community against this public health threat.
- Go to [insert local media information here] to hear the latest information from local officials.
- For more information about the plague, visit the HHS Web site at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) plague page at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/plague/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest information.